

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
OF DEBORAH SANTOS DRUMMOND  
Recorded on March 9, 1991  
by Carolyn Gagnon, San Jose Historical Museum

FINAL TYPING  
4-12-91

INTRODUCTION: Carolyn Gagnon, an Oral History student at San Jose State University in Professor Nancy Grey Osterud's class, is an employee of the San Jose Historical Museum Association. Carolyn arranged to interview Deborah Santos Drummond as an oral history project for the class, but Deborah wishes the interview to become the property of the San Jose Historical Museum Archives. The interviewer prepared a pre-interview statement for the interviewee to sign regarding the procedure for reviewing the transcript and for giving a final release statement to the Museum. The signed pre-interview statement is attached, as is the signed final release statement.

Deborah Santos Drummond was selected by Carolyn Gagnon because she is a Chavarria descendant and the Chavarrias were the last branch of the Jose Loreto Higuera family to own the property known as Rancho Los Tularcitos in Milpitas, California. The adobe from that Rancho is now a part of the park system of Milpitas and is the subject of concern because of seismic standards upgrading. Though the adobe sustained only slight damage in the October 17 earthquake over a year ago, the City is responding to more stringent seismic criteria and is having studies and proposals accepted to provide for work on the adobe. Carolyn would like to develop a file of information on the adobe and the Higuera Chavarria family.

The adobe has an interesting history with many descendants within a close distance who could also be interviewed. Through meeting Deborah through her participation on the Milpitas Cultural Resources Board, of which Carolyn is presently a member, Carolyn determined Deborah Santos Drummond would be a good candidate to be interviewed for the family history, as well as knowledge of the adobe's history.

The interviewer shall be CGG; the interviewee shall be DSD.  
Comments necessary as explanation will be IN CAPS AND PARENTHESES.

CGG: I want to thank you for being willing to have an interview and I wanted to start off first of all with the, your family line. I am interested in doing the interview because of the Higuera adobe and because you are a Higuera descendant. And so I wanted to ask you your full name.

DSD: Deborah Louise Santos Drummond.

CGG: Okay, and where were you born? And your age?

DSD: I was born in San Jose.

DSD: 35

CGG: And are you married?

DSD: Yes

CGG: And how many children do you have?

DSD: One and one due in two days. LAUGHTER

CGG: Your daughter's name?

DSD: Alicia.

CGG: Alicia?

DSD: Yes, the Spanish spelling. Alicia Marie Drummond.

CGG: Your husband's name?

DSD: George Ray Drummond.

CGG: I notice that you use the Santos in your name. And why would you?

DSD: Well, it was something I wanted to do. But when my husband and I first got married he really didn't want it. So I said "no." But City Hall couldn't distinguish the fact that I was the same person and I kept getting one thing in Santos and one thing in Drummond. So, basically City Hall made my wish come true and I got to keep my maiden name. LAUGHTER

CGG: The lineage that links to the Higuera, is that on the is that on the Santos?

DSD: Yes.

CGG: What were your parents, or are your parents' names? Are they still living?

DSD: Yes, they are both living. My father is Kenneth Alfred Santos. My mother is Eleanor Caroline Santos. Her maiden name was Anthenien. SPELLED OUT

CGG: I have done some looking and there were clippings in the paper that you had a family reunion at the adobe not very long ago. (MILPITAS POST ARTICLE) Maybe you can tell me something about that?

DSD: Well basically the family that got together, we are what we call the Higuera Chavarria descendants. Maria Higuera was the last Higuera to live on the land. She married Luis Chavarria.

CGG: And how do you spell that?

DSD: Chavarria. SPELLED OUT

CGG: I've seen it different ways.

DSD: Yeah.

CGG: So that is the correct way?

DSD: Yes. That's correct. And he had jumped ship from Chile. He was one of the Chilean sailors that came up here and jumped ship. He and Maria, (MARIA HIGUERA) was the favorite daughter, so when the land was deeded it was all given to her out of all the children. Their seven children lived on the land. Three of the boys got married. One had no children. The other two did have children and those were the descendants that all got together at the reunion, from those two sides.

CGG: And their names?

DSD: Nicolas Chavarria, actually, I ooh, I just messed it up.

CGG: That's all right.

DSD: Nicolas was Maria's husband. Luis was a son. Okay.  
That was a big boo boo.

CGG: Okay, so we have Maria Higuera ..

DSD: Married to Nicolas... (pause) Luis was his son.

CGG: Okay. And the other brother of Luis?

DSD: Frank

CGG: And are one of these....?

DSD: Luis is mine. Great grandfather.

CGG: All right and your grandfather's name.

DSD: My grandfather's name was Fred Santos. He was Portuguese  
he was born in the Hawaiian Islands and his family came to  
San Jose when he was 18 years old. He use to ride with the  
old motorcycle gangs in the early 1900s and that's when he  
met my grandmother.

CGG: Her name?

DSD: Dorothy Louise Santos. Her maiden name was Chavarria.

CGG: Okay, ummm. She would be the daughter of Luis. Okay, and  
Luis's wife's name.

DSD: Dora Villa ... DSD PRONOUNCED AS VILA NOT VIYA

CGG: lla? Vila

DSD: Uh huh, Moyer. SPELLED OUT

CGG: Tell me all about the reunion. LAUGHTER

DSD: Well it was neat because the last time we tried to get  
together was when my Aunt Della who was Frank's wife was  
still alive and I had just come home from college -- I  
had just completed college that was back in '77.

CGG: Where did you go to school?

DSD: To a college in Los Angeles, Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College - that's a mouthful - it use to be part of Cal Poly Pomona at the time I was attending.

CGG: Okay, you tried to have the reunion after you came back from college.

DSD: Well, actually it was one of my cousins, one of Aunt Della's children that had it and she invited our family but not everybody was able to come and we had talked about it for a long time and she had tried to get it here in Milpitas. Cause for a while I was on the road and we had lost contact, but Milpitas wanted like two to three thousand dollars to rent the adobe to the family for a reunion and nobody had that kind of money (laughter) to put out so it never came about! And then last year, last year I called Stephanie Ratzburg who is the one who originally had the first one and I said "Why don't we try it? I think we can, I can work with the City as I'm on the Cultural Board." And that's how we did it. And we ended up having people come that had never met. It was real odd. All of a sudden I felt real old because my cousins that I had grown up with, the ones that I knew on my side, we all had kids. (laughter) Just about all of us, so it was a very strange but exciting time. One thing we did notice my family has always been, there have been very few divorces, very few problems within the family as a whole

and as spread out as it is we noticed one thing among the children was how they automatically interacted and the behavior. They had all been raised, I guess it's just been carried down, cause my dad said it's the way his grandfather raised him, umm to be very polite, mannered. Even the younger children. You didn't have a lot of yelling and tantrum throwing and having - I taught school for a year - it was very odd to notice that but it was nice. You could see where the family training has stayed there. And that was a neat thing. One sad part about it was one of my cousins that we wanted to see George Contival wasn't here because the Iraq had just invaded Kuwait. He was with the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart Georgia and we didn't know if he had been shipped out yet or what - he had gone black - he was in the blackout. He got shipped out we found out two days after the reunion. But we found out he just got back so we are all happy now.

CGG: Yeah that is something. What is his last name?

DSD: Contival. SPELLED OUT

CGG: Okay, so he is part of Desert Storm.

DSD: Actually, his younger brother was with the 82nd. His younger brother got shipped over a couple months later but he's also back now too. His name is Michael Clark.

CGG: Clark? SPELLED OUT

DSD: Uh huh.

CGG: You have to have another reunion...?

DSD: Yeah and have them show up... LAUGHTER ...it was a very exciting because there were so many people there we didn't know. You just sort of looked at each other and go "Well, okay, who are you?" LAUGH But it was a good time and the family does want to do it again. Um, when I was younger, we had had what we called the Moyer reunion, my great grandmother's family. Basically it was the same people, but it was sort of my family that I've kept in close contact with. It's neat and somebody had suggested "Why don't we have all the Higuera family get together?" I said "We don't want to do that, there is no place big enough for everybody to get together."

CGG: So you have a lot of people that are still in the area?  
Or close by?

DSD: Maria was like an aunt to our cousin descended from Jose.  
(WHISPERING TO THE BABY WHO HAD GRABBED THE CAR KEYS  
OF CGG) DSD LOSES TRAIN OF THOUGHT HERE FOR A WHILE -  
(JOSE LORETO HIGUERA) had 18 children and the only reason  
a third wife outlived him is because he fell off a horse  
when he was 65 and died. Hit his head and died. LAUGHTER  
Otherwise, we doubt that she would have outlived him. LAUGH

CGG: I, I do have the pictures of the reunion from the paper.  
You had a pretty good crowd there.

DSD: There was quite a few of us. There was a few that were not  
able to attend but yes that's about 75% of Maria's  
descendants from two sons. So I'd say that was a pretty  
fair showing. LAUGHTER

CGG: To find everybody and that you'd stayed in contact with each other. That's pretty good. You said that you taught. Was your education, what degree did you get?

DSD: Yes, I have a Bachelor's in Education and a graduate in Theology and I am rather different--I went for my graduate course and finished that in three years and decided to take the normal four years to get my Bachelor's.

CGG: Okay. LAUGHTER

DSD: Don't ask any other questions JOKING and I decided I taught in a private school one year and was--it was more my dad's decision that pushed me into teaching--a lot of people pushed me in some directions - it was not something that I really wanted to do. My goal was to become an archeologist and a historian. And I had had that dream since I was in fourth grade. But, when high school came along in my senior year my dad had become very sick and, I had been pre-accepted at the University of Arizona. But the funds, being an out-of-state student, that we had saved up went to help pay doctor bills, and I ended up getting a work scholarship to Pacific Coast which made my dad happy because that now meant that I was going to become a teacher. Which lasted one year. LAUGHTER I came home and said "No I enjoyed working with the kids but no," and you know went to work for the phone company and ended up in Engineering as an Engineer? So I've had a very strange background.



CGG: It's wandered, its kinda..

DSD: Yes it has wandered a bit and now I am in the process of trying to start my own company.

CGG: What kind of...?

DSD: As a telecommunications consultant analyzing networks telephone bills, making sure people aren't getting over-charged basically and the way it works I look first and then if there is a discrepancy and refunds are due, then I would get a portion of the refunds once they come thru for credit. So it's not where you hear a lot of people - "Oh well I have to pay the consultant X amount up front." Nothing is agreed upon until after. So it's sort of like a freebie, "Hey if you don't have any problems, you're fine."

CGG: Is she going to be okay by that plug WATCHING ALICIA PLAY

DSD: Yeah she's okay.

CGG: I wanted to, have you always, except for school, pretty much always lived in this area?

DSD: Yes.

CGG: And your father and mother still live in this area.

DSD: Basically, all but about 12 of my cousins live in this area. The whole family still lives in the area.

CGG: So not too many people have wandered away out of state or anything like that.

DSD: No, some of the ones that are my age have talked about leaving and the reason is because the Valley isn't as we knew it. It, when we grew up, was agricultural and now

we have kids and it's not what it was. That's the only reason we have even talked about leaving the area but even those who have left have kept in very close contact with those that are still here and with others that are outside the area. It's not been a big problem.

CGG: You've seen a lot of changes in Milpitas then.

DSD: Yes. SIGH I guess you can say I saw Milpitas from an outside view - my husband saw it from the inside.

POUNDING SOUNDS AS FIFTEEN MONTH OLD ALICIA PLAYS

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DSD: I went to school down in Morgan Hill and was born and raised on Metcalf Road but we use to always come out here and Mrs. Curtner always the adobe was always open to the family and her front door was always open to the family. And so we many times as a child I remember coming out here, my father bringing us out and taking us to the adobe, going up and visiting with her. And my frustration was I always wanted to go search her house because it just looked so neat, it was like one of those places on TV. All the Victorian trapings and everything. Beautiful inside and being very inquisitive I just wanted to explore but I never got beyond the sitting room. LAUGH So I saw Milpitas go from what I considered a little hole in the wall to all of a sudden there was people here? It was very shocking and most of my family sort of looked at it that way. Then I met my husband quite by accident-- he fell in front of me roller skating. LAUGH And it was a very odd experience but he LARGE NOISE FROM ALICIA BANGING AN OBJECT was born in Susanville. He was raised here in Milpitas over off of Abbott. And so he grew up here, went to school here, and so between the two of us, between what he's told me and what I saw as a child, I could see the changes in Milpitas. Cause he told me how the places were empty, how he use to go play in K Mart's parking lot when they were just grading it. The Indian burial ground that was over there where there are homes

now. How they would be bulldozing.

CGG: At the K Mart area?

DSD: Yeah, and he'd go over with his friends and his older step brothers and they would go over there and look for bones that the bulldozers were digging up.

CGG: So there weren't any archeology efforts or anything that..

DSD: Not at that time. The one sad thing I noticed about Milpitas that has always hurt me is the lack of preservation effort that was done here. It seemed like the influx was so fast from people outside the area that there was little consideration for what was here. And granted, even in San Jose we had the same problems, there tended to be more people that caught on. What I call the long-time residents--the people that were here before Milpitas became a recognized town seem to sort of been put on the back burner and even today you still find that reflected. You'll hear their names, but they aren't the ones that are in politics. SIGH It shouldn't be like that. But I've noticed it's sort of they've been pushed to the back burner, and I think that is sad that so little emphasis has been put on the history of this town when there was so much done here. Even the Mercury News has changed their attitude. Back in the 40s, 30s-40s, there were articles in the Mercury News that described Milpitas, the people that lived here the Mattos family. Well by that time the Chavarria family, the Cracolices and the older families had

articles on them.

And it was showing the actual history. The more recent articles such as the one the consultant (THE CULTURAL RESOURCES BOARD AND CITY HAD A CONSULTANT CHECK THE HIGUERA ADOBE) referred to in 1975 did not show that.

They, the Mercury News now centers as though Milpitas was developed in the 1950s.

CGG: Have forgotten anything prior to that?

DSD: Yes, or they down play it. And unfortunately if it hadn't have been for the early efforts, Milpitas wouldn't be where it was in the 50s because it was those early efforts that created the area, that created the crossroads, that created a very important part of history here. In the Valley, it contributed a great deal. Not just in the way of agriculture, but in trade, um, even going back to the Spanish period it is one of the few areas where the Indians were treated with respect. Granted, yes, there was Mission San Jose and the fathers there, but even my family had many Indians working for them. And, they respected them for who they were and allowed them to practice and I think that what I see now is a lot of people saying sort of saying everything was all the same. What they did down in Los Angeles they did up in Northern California? Well, we don't do that today, we didn't do it back then. I think this is one of the first places where you are going to find out there was unbiased opinion.

Prejudice was very low, very low among the early residents. It was in the later, or more recent times, the 50s and 60s that the prejudice started to build in the community. And I've heard that from people like Mrs. Curtner and from my great grandmother who spent many years on the ranch, even though she and her husband had a house in San Jose, they would come out here often. Uh, other relatives that my father, that spent summers on the ranch, uh my grandmother who one of her best friend still lives here in town is one of the old families.... Pedro, it was Maria Santos then, it's Maria Pedro now, these people didn't have the prejudice. They would talk, and I've heard stories about that they would say these things about people but never reacted to them. And I, but I see it now and I hear it ALICIA JINGLES KEYS - LAUGHTER

CGG: A little musical accompaniment here.

DSD: Yes, Alicia! JINGLES But I think... Here babe...

CGG: Let's stop for a second. STOPPED TO GIVE ALICIA ATTENTION

DSD: So I think that has been a big drawback - the prejudice I have seen develop and the lack of interest in what was here. And I don't know if the lack of interest is due to the fact that people don't understand

PAUSE TO TURN OVER TAPE

DSD: As I say, I don't know if the lack of interest is due, I mean, or prejudice due to lack of interest because people don't understand what really happened or if it is going back to what I call the 49er mentality that if you

didn't come over the Rockies or weren't part of the Donner Party, you know, you were something less than equal. Which is sad. And I don't know if there is a mixture of that or if it is just a lack of the people that have come into the Valley are more interested in self and their little "I can do this for myself and make a name for myself" rather than looking at the community and saying "this is what the community has done, this is where the community's come from. This is how I can contribute to the community and be a part of what was and what is to happen." I think it may be a mixture of that because a lot of the people that came in here were people who came in basically for the Ford Plant. They were what I call the "early step of the Silicon Valley." You will find that a lot of people who came in for Silicon Valley were basically imported from out of state would talk about the great things back East or wherever they came from but would totally neglect the culture and the history of this area. And their big thing was how fast can we tear down an orchard, put up a building. This place has no history, we'll give it the Silicon Valley. We'll give it chips, we'll give it technology. And that was the wrong approach because to get to the technology, we came from an area that produced practically, oh, 75% of the dried fruit for the world in this Valley. This is one example. That was before computers came along and we were still a large agricultural community when that started. And I think that people get

so involved in themselves, and were moving so fast that they failed to recognize it, and I think Milpitas had the same problem. The Ford Plant came in. You had a lot of people that moved in from outside the area because there weren't enough workers here at the time for the Ford Plant and I think that was a big contributor. Or you had people moving in to work at IBM and they found that living in Milpitas was cheaper. And they moved into this area thinking well it's just a little hole in the wall, thinking it is just a little town that sprung up out of nowhere. There really was anything behind it. And they never really got into the history, they never really understood it and when the Historical Society started they figured it was just a bunch of old people sitting around telling old tales rather than say "these are old people, these are people who lived here, who know something about this community and how it started. And they are not old tales that they're swapping, they're culturally enriched stories that will tell me how important this community was and what started this community - that it wasn't something that some one put up out of the clear blue." PHONE RINGS - PAUSE

CGG: I wanted to find out the traditions and the stories. When you had gone over to the Curtner House and walked around the property, when you've been with your father and other relatives, have they pointed out things to you, talked to you about how life was or how they understood life was?



DSD: Yes. The area around there was so rich in history and stories. It, it's like I wish I could make a movie on it. LAUGHTER Like any good rancho it has its ghost. There's, which the City of Milpitas doesn't realize, the old millstone for grinding the wheat, because we didn't use corn up here, we used wheat, is sitting there in the creekbed. It has been there. There was a murder out there of one of the daughters, one of the Higuera daughters and her child. Two renegades that actually they had worked for the family and they had made advances, one of them made overtures to her. She was married and the family fired them. And they came back to the property and she was down at Penitencia Creek near the adobe, and they murdered her and her baby. ALICIA BABBLING And they were hung there. They ended up catching them and unfortunately were hung. So you do have that part of history. The ghosts - it, it is a friendly spirit - LAUGHTER - they tell me. Um, after the adobe, they, Maria and her husband, moved out and they weren't in the adobe too long.

CGG: This was one of their daughters then?

DSD: Actually, it was one of Maria's sisters that was murdered. But this spirit, my dad swears to it, my grandmother swears to it, and other relatives that were out there will swear up and down that this spirit really exists. But if you get them their backs in a corner, well I don't know.

LAUGH But boy, I think it did. There was a wooden

house, a wooden two-story house that was later built and the family moved into and this was where Maria was living when she died.

CGG: Was this the Casino? What was called the Casino?

DSD: No, no.

CGG: This was elsewhere on the property then?

DSD: This was elsewhere. Actually, this, the house was located underneath--it's where 280 is now. It was a little bit  
(Note: 280 is called 680 in this location)  
further down from the adobe 'cause Mrs. Curtner at that time Curtner Weller owned it, the adobe, by that time. So this was the other half of the property. And, the spirit was a bird, it would take the shape of a bird and, it was kerosene lamps, it would fly right through the lamp and you would see the lamp shatter and then it would fly back and the lamp would be whole. And this is a spirit that wandered out there, but if you try to nail one of them down to that, you won't get them. The other one I've heard of this spirit--there is a sort of, I've heard it from both Spanish and the Portuguese side of the family-- La Pasetta.

CGG: El Paseta? NEED TO CHECK SPELLING

DSD: Just Pasetta is what the family has called it. Some of our terms have been Anglo-ized. Californios had their own form of Spanish which was very pure but they still took some phrases and turned them around. But this was called Pasetta and as a child we were always warned "never leave your scissors open." And one of the men that worked out at the ranch one night had gone to bed and left his

scissors open. And the Pasetta came in - sort of in my mind I picture like a little elf or something, some little mischievous, like a Leprachaun equivalent, came in and cut up all his clothes. LAUGH And as a child we were always told that if we left our scissors open, we were going to have our clothes all cut up. LAUGH Anything that it could cut up, it would cut up. So it sort of stuck in your mind you didn't want to leave your scissors open. You always took a second look and made sure the scissors were always kept....

CGG: Was this a little safety thing that they, you think that they told you so that you would?

DSD: They would swear up and down that it really did happened so I was never real sure if it was a safety thing or not. I do know that my family had some very good story tellers. Um, a tradition that was carried on from years ago and my father became a very good story teller. So sometimes you couldn't tell if he was telling a story or if he was telling the truth. LAUGH

CGG: Did you ever walk on the property and have them point out things to you?

DSD: Yes. They pointed out, well the olive lane. Those trees were all shipped over from Spain and are 200 years old. And I always just wondered what it was like to get all those trees over here. And as a child, of course, I saw the lane when there was a lot more to it.

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DSD: Cause 280 hadn't been put in yet and we use to come up through there. (Again, this is 680 at this site.)

CGG: Did that extend from, where did it extend to and from?

DSD: It was a mile long to give you an idea.

CGG: How many rows were there? Originally?

DSD: There were two rows and it was just solid. And it was known, it was one of the few thing that was known about this area. It was a rarity because it was such a long lane going into the property. But it was all the way from the property line in for the adobe.

CGG: So, it was used as the main entrance to the property.

DSD: Ah, I just, it, it was just it phantomed me that we could have something that monumental, that long. To give you an idea Milpitas High School was built on part of the road. And they didn't pay rent or anything. The family still owned it. Then the late 70s, it might have been early 80, I have to go back and check on it, Milpitas finally decided they should buy that portion of the road that runs right through the High School and I believe it also runs through Thomas Russell (A JUNIOR HIGH ACROSS THE STREET). The road was running through, I mean, that it is quite a ways away.

CGG: So the olive trees went all the way from about the area of Milpitas High School once ran all the way up and across where the freeway is now?

DSD: Yeah.

CGG: It has some other...? There's cactus?

DSD: Yes, the cactus was brought in. That was the most effective fencing that at the time Jose built the adobe that was put all around the building as protection against Indians, grizzly bear, which there were a lot of, mountain lions, they tended not to want to go through the prickly pear cactus. And there are still portions of it where you can see the outline that went around the perimeter of where the family lived. The other thing, behind the adobe directly behind it is what remains of California's oldest fig tree. I don't know whether it became diseased, or is due to lack of care that the original tree died. But all those offsprings there are from the oldest tree. That tree was living up to '75 cause I remember that was the last time I saw it there - alive. Milpitas has, they were a little bit shocked to find that it was those are all from one tree but they haven't really done much to take care of it. The other thing is, the early Californios knew that this although this was a lush area and very plentiful it was also semi-arid and they planted semi-arid, so even back then we had conservation efforts. One of the plants that they had was known as the "rabbit rose", um, you will find this rose in the gardens down in Monterey. And...

PHONE RANG - STOP

CGG: We were talking about the plants and you mentioned the rabbit rose.

DSD: Yeah, the rabbit rose. The one that's out at the adobe

it's in the corner - it's in the corner front of the adobe, is this is a rose that was brought from Europe and planted in these gardens. ALICIA CRYING And, it's what has hurt me is to watch this plant, the City let this plant go down to practically nothing. The plant is practically dead for all intent and purposes, and yet I can go down to Monterey and see where Monterey, where the efforts by the folks in Monterey to take care of these buildings and the plants as well has taken place. And these roses are flourishing. To kill these plants, to allow them to almost die, um, the fact is that they are as old as they are, I think sort of bespeaks what is going on.

CGG: Do you feel there is a neglect then?

DSD: There is a neglect, um, ..

CGG: Or how would you phrase it?

DSD: I think that it is just a lack of concern. It took several years of the Cultural Board before the City started to recognize it and realize its importance, realize the need for it to attend the preservation conferences, to get involved. It was a very, very, long, hard journey. Um, And trying to get the support of the Council (MILPITAS CITY COUNCIL) and the committee, I mean the citizens of the community, and it's not a battle that's over. I don't think it will ever be over. But, unfortunately, the attitude of the current Mayor is if you don't own land here

there's not much he's going to care about.

CGG: This will be McHugh? (Current Mayor is Pete "Primo" McHugh)

DSD: Yes. In conversations with him I have relayed my family's concern and his response was "how much land does your family own here now?" And I'm like.....a renter.

CGG: Rather than what your history is?

DSD: Yeah. Well I'm a renter but what should that matter. The fact that a family is connected to a community and no matter how far away they are they are still concerned about what is going on in that community. It should make the community happy rather than come back and say "well how much land do you own?" There's the Higuera family contributed so much not just to Milpitas, but also to San Jose. Jose was the first Spaniard to trade with the Americans that came into San Francisco Bay. He went out there on the boat. He took the cow hides. He met the ship. He was gone for three days. Everybody assumed the Americans had killed him because he went out there against everybody's wishes and warnings. But he came back loaded down with all sorts of things that he had traded. That unfortunately, was one of the few things, there were so many things, that were lost in the fire 1940 were documents of what Jose did in his lifetime. His close friendship with Vallejo, uh, what actually was taking place because they did keep a lot of diaries with the battle of Santa Clara 'cause his son-in-law was one of the people that was behind leading that battle and this ranch..

CGG: What was that name?

DSD: Oh, Francisco Sanchez. And the Higuera Ranch, this ranch, Los Tularcitos, was the last place that they stopped before they actually went on to the battle. They practiced here.

CGG: And where was that?

DSD: The battle was held towards Mission Santa Clara.

CGG: I mean the practice at the rancho, whereabouts?

DSD: Actually, it was held at the south end of the ranch.

CGG: Is, would this be where the park area is now? Or...

DSD: No, it would be south of that. ALICIA CRYING Um, the fact that has happened....

CGG: This is where they put all the houses isn't it?

DSD: Yes all the houses are in there now. Uh, Clyde Arbuckle was raised out here and he knew my family well. My uncles and aunts that lived out there on the ranch - Maria's children. They had, after they moved out of the adobe, they moved down into the wooden house. There was a huge barn that was built..

NOTICED TAPE  
TURNED OFF - TIME TO FLIP THE TAPE

CGG: We were talking about the adobe. There was a wooden barn and in it there was a basement?

DSD: Yeah, actually this was after the family had moved out of the adobe, they had moved into the wooden two-story building, two-story home. There were surreys down there. I mean we aren't talking just a regular everyday surrey



that was around town. There were very elaborate ones.

There was a bar down there where the Knights of Columbus used to meet. The family used to hold meetings there. The bar had been brought over from Europe. It was all ornate heavy wood that had brought over out of a building that had been torn down over in Europe - an old mansion.

CGG: Were these things that were traded or were these things later?

DSD: These are things that were later bought and brought over.

CGG: Do you know what happened to any of the things that were traded or, from the earlier period?

DSD: We, unfortunately, in the 1940s there was a fire, early 1940s that destroyed the house. And much of what was there on the ranch was lost.

CGG: Was this barn part of that?

DSD: The barn was part of that. Nobody's ever been really sure what happened. My uncle Frank, his family was able to get some things. My great grandfather, Frank's brother, was not as inclined to go in because he felt it was like stealing from the family, cause he still had sisters and brothers that weren't married that were living on the ranch.

So I don't really know what ever became of all of that.

I know there are a few pictures that we do have, but basically, everything the family had, all the history, all the things that had been traded, were lost in the fire. And that due to unscrupulous dealings the ranch was sold for less than the said value.

DSD: The check that was received was minus several zeros.

CGG: Minus several zeros?

DSD: Ah yeah. By a certain person whose statue now stands in St. James Park, who has a rather, um, shadowed, he was considered at that time a great founder of San Jose and has since been found out that he had some very poor dealings not just with the Spanish, but also with other people, older people that I knew as a child, remembered this man well. LAUGHTER And talked about him.

CGG: The last name, do you care to give that or?

DSD: I think I'll just say his statue stands across from the old San Jose Post Office. He had a ... PAUSE

CGG: He had poor? poor rapport?

DSD: Yes. He was a great con man.

CGG: And he was involved with the purchase...

DSD: The selling of the property. Jose Higuera, I should note one of the things, Jose Higuera did not own just Rancho Los Tularcitos. He owned another ranch. Rancho Pala which means a shovel, a special type of shovel. I found this out from Clyde Arbuckle talking to him and that when the US government came in and took over, established the Bear Flag and they said that you had to go in and, the Spanish had to go in and partition PETITION for their land again, all over again. Well this was done, but apparently this judge together with Mr. White (White Road) decided to overlook some things and the next thing that Jose knew is he no longer had possession of that land. Which was the

reason it got the name Rancho Pala--is it was shaped like a shovel and it ran along what is now White Road. And, um, this, the story goes, everyone thinks Mr. White got his just reward as he was on the Jenny Lind when it exploded. LAUGHTER So I think that he did not enjoy it long! No! So that is the way they look at it. ALICIA CRYING

CGG: Have you, there are some different court documents that are down at the San Jose Historical Museum....

DSD: Um hum.

CGG: ...That are in regards to the Rancho and there are a few obituaries. One of them, which I haven't had a chance to look at, is a Valentin?

DSD: Yes, Valentin was Maria's father. And...

STOP FOR ALICIA BACK FOR COOKIES

CGG: Yes, I wanted to ask about Valentin.

DSD: Yes, he was Maria's father. Maria was his favorite child. And when she decided to marry a Chilean, normally this was sort of frowned on in the more respected families, ah, but Valentin because he loved his daughter because she was a favorite child said nothing and threw a fiesta for her. For her wedding, that lasted three days and three nights. And it is noted as the last great fiesta of California. When, Northern California always considered itself its own country, although they had Mexico, um, as a ruler with some soldiers, they basically considered themselves exempt from Mexico--their own country--and even though they had never legally had done it.

CGG: Uh huh!

DSD: The feast he threw, people came from LA, they came from all over the state. Names that you read about in history the Castros, the Vallejos, the Berryessas, the Alvisos, they were all there. Anybody who considered somebody in California at the time was at this feast. It was held at the adobe. There were little huts erected all around the adobe area. Some were for sleeping - although they still had, they had sleeping quarters and some were put up in the main house itself, some people went into San Jose and stayed with friends and then would come back out. Some stayed at the missions, either Santa Clara or San Jose. But each hut, if you went into one hut it would have cheese; if you went into another hut, it had the meats; another hut had breads; another hut had pastries. This was how the whole thing was set up for adults and children. And the bear and bullfight went on. The huge meals were cooked in the ground. They would take a bull and just cook it and it would be so tender. That he did all this for his daughter, and it continued 24 hours a day for three days. And he ended up spending so much money on it because money was of no consequence to the Californios, they basically bartered and traded. It was the Americans that brought in the need for money. The Californios, "Well they, if you got a little problem, you work it out, you barter, you trade, and you ended up getting back what you put out."

DSD: But unfortunately, because it was at "that time," he had to sell off half the land to pay for everything. So that is one of the reasons why if you read the books they will say, "Well at the time of the Bear Flag revolt the Alvisos had the most money." Well the only reason the Alviso family most money at the time was because the Higuera family had just sold it all for the wedding. LAUGHTER And they say "It was the wedding that broke the family." Being the family had always been alcaldes for this area, there was something that just went father to son. It was something community, normally it was something that would change around, but the community had so much respect, the neighbors and everything respected the Higuera family so much, that it was just something that just kept giving back. And being as such, Mission San Jose, although it came under their rule as being an alcalde, they were sent to, they didn't attend church services there. They attended church at Mission Santa Clara which is quite a ways from here. So Maria rode the horse all the way to Mission Santa Clara.

CGG: Um hum.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
OF DEBORAH SANTOS DRUMMOND

DSD: At that time a white dress was not considered appropriate for a wedding. A "colorful" dress was considered appropriate, so hers was multi-colored. It was said to have been very, very beautiful and one of the things was that she rode side-saddle all the way here and that her stirrup was made from a pink ribbon. If the ribbon broke when the bride put her foot in it, that was a sign of bad luck. And usually if that happened the wedding was put off. Maria laughed at it and the wedding continued.

CGG: It did break.

DSD: It did break when she was getting on, on the horse here at the ranch to go into Mission Santa Clara for the wedding, and she laughed at it. And we sort of wonder, "Well, maybe that was a sign ..." LAUGHTER .."of what was going to happen."

CGG: But...

DSD: Hers was the last wedding at the ranch of any family member until my marriage in '87. ALICIA PLAYING SOUNDS

CGG: So you were actually married out at the adobe.

DSD: At the ranch, yes I was married at the adobe and the family joked about it. Basically my husband and I paid for the wedding cause it was small and it was just, there were some friends, but mainly just family members - real close family members. MUSIC FROM ALICIA They jokingly said "Well Maria broke the family, what are you going to

do?" LAUGHTER "I am not going to try and break everybody!" But they said, "Well you picked a good time" because it was December 18th, LAUGH when everybody is broke because they are getting ready for Christmas. So I said, "See I can't break you, you've already bought your gifts!" LAUGH I was the, so I was..

CGG: So you were first to be married ..... since Maria?  
Carry on the tradition.

DSD: Yes. And my daughter ...who makes music... LAUGHING  
BECAUSE WE HEAR HER IN THE BACKGROUND .... her middle name

CGG: They were musical people generally.

DSD: ...is for Maria. It is also for her aunt, my aunt Marie Kruse which is my mother's oldest sister. Her last name is Kruse SPELLED OUT and she was, uh, my mom's family they had always lived out in the Evergreen area mostly, and she owned the ranch that's across from The Villages. (A RETIREMENT HOME) So, it's been a long time. So, it's an old ranch.

CGG: Um, you kind of look like you might be getting a little tired. You are going to have a baby here in a couple of days.

DSD: Now I am just trying to keep my brains together here.  
I just keep shifting REFERS TO SITTING POSITION  
and it works.

CGG: Do you want a little boy or girl? Or any particular preference?

DSD: Yes at this point I would prefer a boy, but I'd be very happy with a girl. Simply if it is a boy I'll say "Okay that's it we've got two -- no 18 kids here!"

LAUGHTER My family, pretty much, it is sort of funny when you look at it now, and everybody averages about three kids in the family--which is rather strange, I mean, out of all the cousins...and there is usually when one child is born there are usually two others that are born at the same time. So the family literally goes in groups of three - be it birth or death. And I have had many people tell me I am superstitious and, you know, I am just making that up or that my mind causes it to happen. I said, "Well I can't cause somebody to be born and I can't cause somebody to be dead." But if you go through the family since the 40s it has pretty much been like that. There are some that have had one children or some that have had four. But somehow it seems to average out to where it comes out to, by married couples, it averages out to three kids. It's rather strange.

CGG: That's a nice family for modern times though.

DSD: Yeah, but it's always seemed to be like that and like Alicia has two cousins that were born right around her within a couple of months of her. So we, it's, we can't say; I think there is something there - it's something odd, but there's something there.

CGG: Thank you for talking about babies and carrying on traditions. What do you want them to know about their



heritage? What do you want your children to know?

DSD: I want them to be "proud" of it. I want them to know that they came from a family of ancestors. Yes there are probably the little black holes in the wall, but that basically they had a family that contributed a lot, that gave a lot, that respected people, that one of the greatest compliments that was ever paid to the family was there was by Marion Curtner who said "That they were truly the last of the Spanish dons." And in reading about Spanish dons, you find out that they were people that were very giving, very caring. I want the children to know that. I want them to be raised to be proud of who they are. There is a history on my husband's side. I want them to be proud of that and to realize that it was not just Spanish, there are other areas in it, but whatever they do, they are the result of what their ancestors started. That they have something to be proud of, that there will always be something there, something that they can say that was me, or that was my grandfather or my great grandfather. And they can reach out and say "my mother told me, my grandfather told me, or something. Or I've read it somewhere and this is who they were and this is who I am." Because they are part of their ancestors, there is that connection; and "I want that to continue with them."

CGG: It's special.

DSD: It is something that when I was going to college and I

was talking to people, people would go "Well there is my mom and my dad and brothers and sisters." But they didn't really know anything else out of their immediate family. To me immediate family is not just my mother and father and sisters. My immediate family goes beyond that. When we talk about cousins, we don't talk about "Oh, you're my fifth cousin, or you're my eighth cousin. You are my cousin." If it is by marriage, we don't bring that in. Although people will sometimes ask "Well how are you related." And then we will look at each other, and we will have to stop and think where the connection comes in. But in our family, the way that we have always been brought up, or we've been taught -- the way I want to teach my children -- it doesn't matter how far the line goes or how separated it may be, you are still close and you still share something that is very important - a heritage. And that is something that my parents instilled in me, something my aunts and uncles instilled in me and instilled in their children. And that is what I want to see going. And my cousins that are my age, my sister's age - this generation now that is having children - that's something we've all talked about and that's something that we'll try to instill in ours. That's what we want.

CGG: Okay, thanks, maybe we can continue another time.

DSD: Okay.

CGG: Thank you.      END OF TAPE

ORAL HISTORY FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW  
OF DEBORAH SANTOS DRUMMOND  
by Carolyn Gagnon  
FINAL TYPING JUNE 3, 1991

[SANTOS 103]

The follow-up interview was postponed to April 27. The pre-interview agreement has been signed off and we are going to answer some questions that came up as a result of the first interview. DSD will be Deborah Santos Drummond and CGG will be Carolyn Gagnon.

CGG: One of the questions that came up was you said that Maria inherited the land at Los Tularcitos.

DSD: Right.

CGG: Was she the only one that inherited land, or did she get the majority of the land? Why would that be?

DSD: She was Valentin's, although Valentin did have other children. I, my cousin did some research on that. I think she knows who they were. I don't. But for some reason, unbeknown to anybody, there may have been an agreement the other children could live there til they died and she was the only one left living, but Maria indeed had all the land. And it was hers. The adobe by that time had been sold. Her father had to sell it to pay for the wedding expenses but all the other half of the ranch that she and her husband lived on with her children was all theirs.

CGG: The other thing was Mrs. Curtner, you said you visited her, and did she ever, she never lived in the adobe did she?

DSD: No, she never did. She lived in the house, the old Victorian. Mrs. Curtner had, she referred to my great-grandfather and his brothers as the "last Spanish Dons." She said they were true gentlemen and I've always taken that very well. You know, that's a great compliment to have paid to you. But she also knew what the family had gone through losing the land, the fire, just a lot of problems that had happened and she had a great respect for history. She loved history and she wanted to see that adobe preserved because of the history behind the adobe, and behind the site. And that's why she went with her own money at that time in the '50s that was unheard of, she spent her money to do what was state-of-the-art at the time to preserving the adobes. She did, at that, according to the standards of the time, a beautiful job. And when she died that is why she wanted it to go become a State park or, you know, something where it was not City oriented but was going to become a landmark of sorts. That's what she wanted for the adobe. But it was a time when our history hadn't developed fully. We liked things like Sutter's Mill and Vallejo's house, which were intact. The State really didn't have the money for other places or weren't really interested in it.

CGG: So she took that on by herself?

DSD: Yeah, she took it on all by herself and then she even had it deeded to the State in her will.

CGG: It was deeded to the State in her will.

DSD: Yes and the State didn't want it because they didn't want to put any more money into parks, historical parks at the time. And the State historical foundation which was the other choice didn't have the money, even though she set some money aside--there was going to be other monies needed, you know, down the road--they didn't have it and so they said they would not take it.

CGG: Was there any fundraising or anything like that or was most of the funding strictly from her?

DSD: It was strictly from her. She never even approached the family about raising the money. That was something she wanted to do. As a child I remember her. It, she considered it an honor to be able to take care of something. That had so much history with it. And she would constantly tell us, reinforce the history of it--we'd visit out there--she of course talking to my dad, and then she'd talk to us at our level and she would tell us how proud, you know, what a heritage we had and be proud of it. She was a very tiny woman but she was very, she made an influence on you.

STOPPED - HER NEWBORN BABY GIRL CAROLINE FUSSED AND DEBORAH WENT TO GET A BOTTLE FOR HER.

CGG: I don't know if I made it clear last time on Jose Loreto Higuera, his parents, do you know what his parents names were.

DSD: I'll be back in a minute. SHE WENT TO GET A BOOK. It was Ignacio that was Jose's father, now the records on the mother I don't have. On the mother's name. But Ignacio and his brother came up with DeAnza and were each given land in Pueblo San Jose for the founding, the settlement. And they were all military officers including Jose and his brother who had Rancho Agua Caliente. Um, that's how they were deeded lands based on, back, the Spanish land grants were granted on the basis of what you did for the country of Spain. And those were the only people who got it. So to get something from Spain you had to be basically in the military. It wasn't til Mexico succeeded from Spain and in essence taking California with it that people other than the military were allowed to petition for land grants. But the land grants were much smaller under the Mexican government than they were under the Spanish government because..

CGG: You mean acreage?

DSD: ...acreage wise. Spanish, nothing was shorter than what they call a King's League. And that's something like 5,000 acres. It's a large, I mean,

you think of it. And they came up with the King's League, it was a measurement they used over in Europe when they would measure out the King's land and so here nothing less than that was granted. You, so if you were an officer, and you were being a military person under Spanish rule in California being granted land you knew you were getting nothing less than that.

CGG: It was a minimum almost?

DSD: That was the minimum. They granted nothing less. As a matter of fact, they usually granted more. And it was only after, they would say like a league and a half or two leagues and that's how it was done. But there was never like, oh you're only going to get half a league. That was just not done. Once the King granted it, he granted that large amount.

CGG: There was a Jose Higuera in about 1805 that was killed in an expedition in Sunol...

DSD: Um hum.

CGG: And I understand that he had his hands cut off. Or something by Indian people and was left to die. Is that one of the Higuera's that you are directly related to?

DSD: To my knowledge no. I've heard the story, but I have never made any connection. My grandfather Jose had all of his, both of his hands. They

weren't cut off to our knowledge, you know, nothing ever happened because everything that was passed down was that he had everything. Um, it could have been from his uncle, or one of his uncle's children. As you say, the name Jose was common and given that fact, it could have been, he could have been named after someone. Because he (her grandfather) got the land grant in 1821 so we are talking 1805.

CGG: This is someone previous...

DSD: Previous, that he could have been named after or something.

CGG: When Nicolas Chavarria came, you had said that he had jumped ship...

DSD: Yes.

CGG: And was this before American time or was this...

DSD: Yes this was before American time. This was...

CGG: Do you know why he did that?

DSD: Well it was common at that time. The Chileans were starting to come into California. And they were, some areas welcomed them. A lot of areas did not but they were, this is like "okay come in if you want" and we'll set you up. There were quite a few Chileans as a matter of fact that were here. There were Chilean communities already established. Sort of like the neighbors you go in, like you have, we have in our community, we



have these people that make their own separate community because they are comfortable one nationality, or one nation. And that is what was happening with the Chileans. NOW DAUGHTER ALICIA IS UP AND COMING TO TALK TO US. YOU WILL HEAR HER ON THE TAPE FROM NOW ON. Many of them were of mixed Spanish/Indian descent and they basically were leaving Chile because there wasn't much down there, they didn't like the persecution that was going on. Because there was persecution going on in Chile similar to what was happening in Mexico. Also the fact that they were mixed, they were looked down on by both sides so many of them became sailors and came up here and jumped ship.

CGG: It wasn't a Gold Rush thing?

DSD: No. He was not part of the Gold Rush.

CGG: Okay. I wanted to ask about...it came up that you went to a Baptist bible college. And LAUGHTER

DSD: Yes LAUGHING

CGG: And somewhere along the line there was a conversion. I was just wondering what generation that might have been.

DSD: I would have to say that happened with my great-grandfather's family or generation. He married a Protestant girl. She, her, my great-grandmother Dora Moyer comes from Ames Iowa and her family basically came over my rail to settle on the

Miller-Lux Ranches. And so they were one of the families around Dos Palos and they are still very, the Moyer clan although they are not under Moyer anymore, the daughters had different names, um, they are still very strong and there are still some ranches on one side of it down in Dos Palos, Fresno. They are still strong down there, but she was raised a Protestant. And my grandmother and her two brothers were their grandfather, my, their father, was a very quiet man like the rest of the family (Spanish) and he taught them Catholic ways but mother took them to the Protestant church. ALICIA CRYING - STOP.

CGG: The reason that I asked that was because I was wondering if it was the time that the Spanish families started to marry in with the American families and the influences...

DSD: No, 1840s is when she married and it had nothing to do with that. But that was right before the Bear Flag revolt took place and it had nothing to do with that. And not the marrying in. Um although people like Sutter and other people were here they were welcome in, because you know they wanted to come here and start a new life. So.

CGG: There was another part in the transcript where we were talking about the Higuera Adobe and you

mentioned the rabbit rose. Do you have any idea why it is called the rabbit rose?

DSD: Well, the story that has been passed down to me, and when I went to the adobe conference this last year in Monterey, I asked someone down there. They told me the same thing. It was because rabbits would hide in the rose. They would use it to burrow in there and that is how, that's what I was told as a child, and when I was down there I asked one of the people in charge of one of the adobes down there, and was familiar with the plants and vegetation, I asked him "Do you know if this has another name?" And the only name we have ever been told is rabbit rose. And he told me why and it was the same thing I'd been told as a child. It's because of the rabbits hid underneath it. Because the briars would protect it.

CGG: Did it have a Spanish, is there a Spanish...

DSD: The Spanish name would translate, from what I got it was the same thing in Spanish -- the rabbit rose -- so you would translate it from the Spanish world. English to Spanish. So it was the same thing. The Spanish called it rabbit rose.

CGG: Has anybody....ALICIA GETTING INTO SOMETHING...

DSD: Alicia.

CGG: Has anyone in your family drawn out a map of the adobe area and marked on it where they remember various things. In other words, when they were surveying over there for the adobe and they did a survey on it, was your family asked where things were or was it strictly archeological finding where things were left. Did you have any input in that?

DSD: Our family was never asked about anything. As a matter of fact when I was first on the Cultural Board (MILPITAS HAS A CULTURAL RESOURCES BOARD WHICH DEBORAH SERVED ON IN 1990) they had some things written about the adobe that were not true.

CGG: And what would those be?

DSD: Oh, it I don't remember what some of the things were. Oh, it was that they had less land than was actually there and they had there was only one building on the site. Some things that obviously people had done without checking into it. That Jose had been the last owner and just a little messed up. And I said well these things are incorrect. And I remember them looking at me going what do you mean. I said this was actually what was there. And there was no, no nothing asked prior to that the family had never been approached. I almost got it, the attitude

I always got from the City, they didn't think the family was around anymore or cared. Which is because we didn't live in Milpitas didn't mean we didn't care. And that wore em out and just think the efforts were put in finding other things. They were more interested in things like Campbell's Corners history because it seemed more illustrious and it was more Americana. Milpitas tries to, I think in what I have seen, you see a lot more of Milpitas wants to say "we're the crossroads." And it's like we were there, you know, the farmers were there. This was the stage stop. There was something here before the stage stop that they tend to sort of slow down at that point unfortunately. And there just wasn't that much done. Even in "Little Cornfields" there is just not that much done on it. There is more done on more modern.

ORAL HISTORY FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW  
WITH DEBORAH SANTOS DRUMMOND  
by Carolyn Gagnon  
April 27, 1991

CGG: Does any, do you ever hear any stories from you family about cornfields. Milpitas supposedly has its name because of cornfields. What do they say about that?

DSD: There were farmers out here. Different people were farming different things. The ranch got its name (LOS TULARCITOS) because there were tules everywhere out here. Not so much what people were growing. CHUCKLE. It's what was growing because the Bay has pulled back quite a ways. There were tules all over the place like down by City hall and heading out that way. That was all marshland. I would hate to think what's going to happen in an earthquake in marsh land. LAUGHTER. You know.

CGG: Um.

DSD: But, it was filled with tules and there was no one particular family that farmed a huge amount of any crop. They all farmed large crops--the Higueras had walnuts and prunes. They were growing fruit. They basically raised fruit and nuts. There was some wheat that they used but basically fruits and nuts. Other families; other plants or tree orchards.

CGG: This was more about the American period of time.

DSD: Yes this is the American period so they call themselves little cornfields but...it's a name a Spanish name I don't know who picked it up. But I think tules would have been more appropriate. But I think its more like it is one of those names, some places get named something because somebody thinks it sounds neat. Some Americans thought it sounded neat... "Alicia" (ALICIA SPEAKING OUT) because like Manteca is lard. Well who is going to call a town lard? But that's what its called.

CGG: You had mentioned your husband had played over in K-Mart area and has he ever drawn a map or anything like that or does he recall exactly where they found different things?

DSD: Yeah he could find that but he's never drawn a map.

CGG: At one point in the transcript you mentioned the attitudes that the Spanish people had with Indian people that had come and lived at the ranch after the missions secularized. And you said the attitudes were really pretty good toward one another and then you compared that to when Americans came. And you said that there was more discrimination. I was wondering if you had any comments to elaborate on that?

ALICIA CRYING

DSD: The Spanish were, the Spanish that were here. Spanish Californians were a lot more tolerant of other races and their people. In Southern California you didn't have that, but then you had a lot more, a lot of things going back and forth between Mexico and Southern California.

STOPPED WHILE DEBORAH ASKED ALICIA'S DADDY TO TAKE HER BECAUSE OF CRYING.

CGG: We touched on attitudes towards the different cultures when they came together. I guess I should go back and ask...

TELEPHONE INTERRUPTS - STOP

CGG: Has anyone ever actually sketched out the adobe in your family.

DSD: My Dad when I was younger. I remember my Dad, who I think is a pretty good artist, he never took art lessons or anything like that, drew from memory the adobe as he remembered it as a child. As far as anybody else, I don't know that anybody else has really done anything. I just know that they can take you out and show you spots where things were. I don't think anybody else has really written it down.

CGG: Has anybody, you talked about the wedding, I was wondering the wedding dress. Is that anything that was passed down or did anybody ever describe it or draw it.



DSD: There were, it probably was passed down, well yeah probably was. And there were probably descriptions of it but unfortunately the fire destroyed the ranch. All the record, anything that was there was gone--photos,...

CGG: And also you talked about a carriage. I wonder if anyone ever described it. You know actually maybe looking through a carriage book and looking at styles of carriages.

DSD: My dad could tell you exactly how the carriage looked. He probably could describe the bar to you too.

CGG: There was the bar?

DSD: The wooden bar that was shipped over from Europe that was down there. Clyde Arbuckle I believe was down there. He use to ride with them, my uncles, with the bicylers that came from this area. There was a bicyle group -- the "bones" or something like that or whatever the group was called. And he was with my uncles were in that group and they sometimes would meet down there. So Clyde has seen it. Clyde Arbuckle had seen the bar. But I don't know what his memories are of it. The man has a fantastic memory but...I don't know.

CGG: I don't know if you had any chance to talk with anyone since I interviewed you, but the

bird spirit and the scissor stories that you told. Did you find out anything further about those--the origins?

DSD: I can't find, I couldn't find out anything more than that, than what I told you. Ah, the stories that were told, my grandmother said that there were other stories told but she said there were no ghosts. And I said well I'm not talking about ghosts. LAUGHTER These were spirits. Um, there has been some speculation that there were probably other tales but my great-grandfather and his brothers and sister felt it was un-American for the children to learn Spanish and so they always communicated in Spanish, except around the kids when they wanted the kids to know something and they spoke to them in English. They were bilingual. That was one thing that Maria had insisted that her children be bilingual.

CGG: Even back then? Maria...

DSD: Even back then. And they had very good grammar. They were very well dressed men but they just the Spanish was not passed on so the Spanish I know now, that my cousins speak, what we speak we had to learn from school. But I think that there were probably stories and stuff that have

basically stopped there.

CGG: What about music and entertainment?

DSD: It was storytelling. Tales. You know they would make up stories. Entertainment. My Dad tells that at night my Aunt Nick would, she was blind, NICOLASA she was blinded when a young child, and she did all the cooking out at the ranch. And she was not married and she would always have these big elaborate desserts and things all the time and then after that they played cards, would tell stories, and sometimes they would sing. There was more storytelling, things that would keep the family together--talk about what had happened that day--

CGG: Visiting kinds of things...

DSD: A lot of visiting. Just relaxing.

CGG: There was a question that came up about the Rancho Pala land and what event led up to losing that land? Do you know?

DSD: That was at the time they had filed for the land grants--refiled. According to the U.S.

CGG: According to the land claim..

DSD: As a land claim, the U.S. government came in and said "We don't recognize any of the land grants. You have to refile under us." Jose filed for Rancho Pala the same way that he did for Rancho Tularcitos. He had two

different judges. There were no attorneys in the area being knowledgeable of the land, or actually Valentin being knowledgeable on what was going on, having some influence with other people filed both land grants the same way. But when the judge in San Jose area came back the land grant was given to the, through some means that were never found out, it was sort of all hush, hush on why one did went through and the other one didn't.

CGG: So one was granted and that was Tularcitos and the other one was denied.

DSD: Yeah, but prior to the denial James, or Mr. White got it. So he had it even before the denial was in place. So there was definitely some things going on and didn't. I think it was a matter of who, who or who was willing to take bribes, okay bribes, I think it was a lot of it. Americans came in obviously there was settlement in the San Jose area. There was not a settlement up here. I think it was one reason why Rancho Los Tularcitos was probably not given away.

CGG: It was out of the main area? That people lived in?

DSD: Yeah, otherwise I think Jose probably would have some problems keeping that. We have to remember

that the United States Government denied Sutter his land grant even though it was legal. A lot of people don't realize that today that's not really brought up when you go to the site. And that Sutter died on the steps of the White House where he went. Both of his sons were lawyers. They had gone back to American universities prior to American influence here of the Gold Rush and studied to become lawyers and both of his sons fought for his land and could do nothing. And all the government did was when he went back there to say it was illegal, they gave him a title, military title and uniform. And he was wearing that. It became ragged and torn and he was wearing that uniform when he died on the step. And as I heard the story is, that some people, he just collapsed, and people just walked around him. They thought he was a funny one, but all he wanted was his land back. Or at least a part of it so he could go home to it. Because he had no home.

CGG: Was there a point in the Gold Rush when any of the Higuera that you know of went up into any of the mining country?

DSD: Not, none that I know of. Not from my direct line. There could have been some aunts or uncles who took off that we don't, that nobody

really talked about. It is very likely they could have but there is nothing noted that we know of and again that was probably something that would have been written down that was lost unfortunately. Because they would have kept track of where their children were.

CGG: The instructor at San Jose State (NANCY GREY OSTERUD) she said that the description of the wedding and everything which is really eloquent. She was just curious who had, or who was the person furthest back you can think of that has told that story.

DSD: My great-grandmother was the one farthest back and my Aunt Della. Aunt Della died quite some years ago, oh shoot, died back in '79? or '78. And I had only met her a couple of times. She did not speak very good English; she was Spanish and my great-grandmother, which was her sister-in-law, she told me about it. Um my great-grandmother got it from her husband who was Maria's son.

CGG: From Luis?

DSD: Yeah from the other brothers and sisters. And so that's how far back I got it from. And everybody was pretty clear about the wedding so I have a feeling Maria was very, you know, she must have told the stories over and over again.

CGG: Do you know from which of, let's see Valentin, was her father then, and Margarita Saez was her mother - there were no other wives or anything or other descendants from him. So it was Jose Loreto Higuera that his first wife was a Bernal I guess.

DSD: There was a Garcia and I can't think of who the other one was in between. My cousin fortunately has that whole tree.

CGG: So it has been researched by her.

DSD: Yes, I started it and then she jumped in and we have had a couple of disagreements. She tried to say somebody is an uncle and I say no, no he's not an uncle and she says "this is what it says in the records but that's not what family history has told us." So it has been a question of what was written down versus what has been handed down and I sort of go with what was handed down versus what was written down because some things have been written down wrong.

ORAL HISTORY FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW  
WITH DEBORAH SANTOS DRUMMOND  
by Carolyn Gagnon  
April 27, 1991

CGG: Also, that wedding, you said they went to Santa Clara for the wedding and the family generally went to church at Mission Santa Clara.

DSD: It is odd because he was the alcalde for the Mission San Jose area. Mission San Jose was considered a church, it is, I know it sounds really weird, even back then they had their little classes. And basically the Indians or the farmers went. The alcalde, or the upper class families drove to Mission Santa Clara in the era. If you were an upper class family you drove to Santa Clara. It was the more elaborate. And if you look at the two missions you can see that there is a definite difference in the ornateness, even took pictures from the previous Mission Santa Clara, so there is a difference in the ornateness. And that is because of the types of families that they catered to.

CGG: So your family would have gone to the Mission Santa Clara at both the third site, the one that was destroyed by the earthquakes, as well as the one that was rebuilt. Are there any stories of them being involved in the ...

DSD: the rebuilding?



what happened. We know that they were involved because there are brief references from other people, the families, or priests and things like that. But to what extent we don't know.

CGG: Okay. I have an article here that has a brief sketch of what the historic site looked like and on it there is a big body of water, looks like a lake? Do you recall anything about a lake?

DSD: The only lake that I know was a reservoir that Mrs. Curtner had put in.

CGG: Is it for farming?

DSD: Yeah. Now that was for the ranch. You know for it has the big tanks up there and everything. Now this article came out in Jan. 17, 1974. At that time I was in my first year of college. I remember this article coming out because I remember my dad being very upset about it. Because he wasn't, it felt like they hadn't really, it just came out and nobody contacted anyone in the family. My grandmother, my great-grandmother was still alive at the time, so was her sister-in-law Della.

CGG: So they could have probably shared a lot on that property?

DSD: Della lived on the land quite a while. Her husband was Frank. And...

CGG: Chavarria?

DSD: Yeah. And although she spoke Spanish, you could translate. She did speak some broken English. So there was, this article was written as though nobody had even thought to ask the family what was going on.

CGG: Do you recall any other articles that were written about the adobe that were accurate articles that maybe your family talked about.

DSD: Yes, like I had said, the San Jose Mercury News you know in recent years has sort of downplayed it. A really good, what my dad has shown me, and my research, what I had read, one of the last really good article wrote on it was on February 22, 1931.

CGG: That is the one that you have shown me a copy of.

DSD: Yeah. Basically my dad got it off the microfiche. It's got several photos of the ranch as it was in '31--that is when the family was still living on it. It shows the fig tree, the olive lane, the cactus fence, some of the adobes that were collapsing that are now completely gone. It's got a picture of the Curtner house on it and the adobe with the second story that Columbet put on it. He gave us just the section with the photographs for a reminder of our wedding because that's where we got married was in the old

adobe. But I remember reading the article when I was doing research. I think I am the one that stumbled across it LAUGHTER

CGG: I'll look for a copy down at the San Jose Historical Museum. They have a lot of the Mercury stories there.

CGG: I guess the last thing I want to ask you, the final thing sort of for the interview, is what are your feelings as far as the Californio people's history and how it is portrayed?

DSD: It's been pushed in the back corner, something that nobody really wants to recognize. We've recognized many other cultures. Even the Mexican Americans here now don't even want to really associate with the Californios. And they get upset when we say we are Hispanic, because we are. But they want to consider themselves the only Hispanic. It's sort of a funny little quirk in the system. We recognize Mexican American culture, we recognize the Portuguese, the Italians, the Japanese, many other cultures, but yet this one culture that was very unique that was a pivotal point in the starting of this State and a great asset to the Nation has been forgotten. It's been put to the side. It's like nobody wants to talk about it. I don't know if it's because

of the way it came about. Because it was literally an overthrow by a large country against an area that didn't want to fight, even though they did have the people to fight, they didn't really want to, they didn't want the deaths. It is a fight against a people that were not as prejudiced as the ones coming in. I don't know. I feel that we need to have our own site, a site where we are recognized. A museum of our own or a building of our own that can tell the history of the Californios contributions. Yes there is positive and negative but I think it all needs to be said, needs to be put out there. But I think because the Californios have been through so much, it has been passed down about the hurt, pain, the prejudice, the ignorance or refusal of other cultures to recognize them. I think a lot of Californios, even though they are proud of who they are, they've pulled in and they don't want to give out because they don't want any more pain, any more hurt to come back on the families. They don't want it, they don't want old wounds open. The Japanese culture fought and finally after 40 years have gotten the money from when they were put in the intern camps. You know, we look at things like that yet here land, you know, the Indians are still fighting for their lands.

Yet here was land taken from people (CALIFORNIOS) and nobody's ever said anything about it. But the families have just suffered through so much that we are just going to go ahead. We are proud of our background, but we are just going to go ahead and live our lives as we can now through the system. And I think that is what they are doing but I think we need to, I think the Californios, or at least the State should recognize us as a community that played a large part and needs its story told.

CGG: Yeah. I could agree with that. Well it is running late here and it is getting longer and longer but "thank you so much" and I'll transcribe it and let you review it. Then we will include it with the other transcript okay?

DSD: Okay.